

FACT SHEET

Build a Better Texas Report (2013)¹

In 2013 researchers from the University of Texas-Austin and Workers Defense Project conducted surveys with 1,194 construction workers across five Texas cities regarding their wages and working conditions. The survey found the following results:

Wages²

- Only 25% of those surveyed responded that they received wages of \$14.00 or more, widely considered to be the threshold of a “living wage” for two adults and two children.³
- Of the same population surveyed, 50% received less than \$11.08/hr., placing them below the federal poverty line when the report was written.

Wage Theft⁴ and Misclassification⁵

- 22% of those surveyed reported having been victims of wage theft.
- Those who had experienced wage theft reported they were owed a median of \$960, more than two weeks of pay.
- Build a Better Texas researchers estimated that Texas construction workers as a whole lose at least \$117 million in wages due to wage theft each year. These lost wages cost the state of Texas an estimated \$8.8 million in tax revenues annually.
- The report also calculated that 41% of Texas construction workers, or more than 300,000 workers across the state, had experienced payroll fraud or misclassification.

Safety⁶

- Only 40% of respondents reported their employer provided workers compensation insurance
- 39% of respondents did not receive rest breaks
- 59% responded that their employer did not provide drinking water on the jobsite
- 61% had not received OSHA-10 safety training

Wages for Construction Workers in Texas: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017 Data

Data from the US Department of Labor shows that wages for construction laborers in Texas are 21.8% lower than the national average.

- The mean hourly wage for a construction laborer in Texas was \$15.02.⁷
- The mean hourly wage for a construction laborer nationally was \$18.70.⁸
- In annual wages this difference translates to \$31,240 in Texas vs. \$38,890 for the national mean.

¹ Price, A., Timm, E., & Tzintzun, C. (2013). *Build a Better Texas: Construction Working Conditions in the Lone Star State*. Retrieved from: http://www.workersdefense.org/Build%20a%20Better%20Texas_FINAL.pdf

² *Build a Better Texas*, p.18

³ Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator. “Living Wage Calculation for Texas.” Retrieved from: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/48>

⁴ *Build a Better Texas*, p.46

⁵ *Build a Better Texas*, p. 24

⁶ *Build a Better Texas*, pp.15-17

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2017. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tx.htm

⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). “Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2017.” Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm

Minimum Wage Workers in Texas: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017 Data⁹

In 2017 Texas was the state with largest number of jobs paying the minimum wage or less. This number, approximately 196,000, is five and half times the number of minimum wage jobs in California, a state with a third more total workers.

Fatal Occupational Injuries in Texas: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016 Data¹⁰

Department of Labor data from 2016, the most recent year available, demonstrated that Texas remains the most dangerous state to be a construction worker.

- 133 construction workers were killed on the job in Texas in 2016, a 7.25% increase from the 124 Texas construction workers killed on the job in 2015. The state with the second highest number of construction fatalities was New York with 74, or 57% fewer fatalities than Texas.
- The 2016 figure is the highest number of construction workers killed in Texas since 2009.
- Construction is the most dangerous industry in Texas, accounting for a nearly a quarter (24.4%) of the of the state's occupational fatalities. The rate increased from 23.5% in 2015. The US fatality rate for construction workers is 19.9%.

Access to Paid Sick Time in Austin, TX: Institute for Women's Policy Research¹¹

In August 2017 the IWPR released a briefing paper outlining the access to paid sick time among Austin workers. The report found the following:

- Approximately 37% of workers in Austin lack access to paid sick time.
- Hispanic and Black workers are less likely to have access to paid sick time. 52% of Hispanic workers and 41% of Black workers lack access to paid sick time.
- Workers in the construction and service professions were the least likely to have access to paid sick time. Only 30% in construction and 35% in the service sector had access to paid sick time according to the report.
- Only 27% of part-time workers (those working 35 hours or less) have access to paid sick benefits.
- Only 26% of workers in the lowest earnings bracket (less than \$15,000) had access to paid sick benefits.

Access to Paid Sick Time in Texas: Institute for Women's Policy Research¹²

In March 2017 the IWPR released a briefing paper outlining the access to paid sick time among Texas workers. The report found the following:

- Approximately 40% of Texas workers, more than 4.3 million across the state, lack access to paid sick time.
- Hispanic and Black workers are the least likely to have access to paid sick time: 50% of Hispanic workers and 37% of Black workers lack access to paid sick time.
- Workers in the food preparation, service and personal care (which includes child and elder care), and construction sectors had particularly limited access to paid sick time. Only 32% in construction, 26% in the service and personal care sector, and 22% in food preparation had access to paid sick time according to the report's findings.

⁹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). "Minimum Wage Workers In Texas-2017." Retrieved from: https://www.bls.gov/regions/southwest/news-release/minimumwageworkers_texas.htm

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016). "Fatal Occupational Injuries in Texas-2016" Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2016/iiffw48.htm>

¹¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2017) "Access to Paid Sick Time in Austin, Texas" https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/B366_Austin-Access-Rates-8-29-17-Final.pdf

¹² Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2017) "Access to Paid Sick Time in Texas" <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/B366-Texas-Paid-Sick-Time-Access-Rates.pdf>

- Only 21% of part-time workers in Texas (those working 35 hours or less) have access to paid sick benefits.
- Only 31% of Texas workers in the lowest earnings bracket (less than \$15,000) had access to paid sick benefits.